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Report on the midterm review of the medium-term strategic plan 2006-2009**

Summary

This report provides information on the midterm review of the medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) 2006-2009, and should be read in conjunction with the companion document on the revised annexes to the MTSP (E/ICEF/2008/19). It includes a draft decision on the extension of the current MTSP by two years, to the end of 2011, explained in a background note (E/ICEF/2008/25).

* E/ICEF/2008/16.
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Introduction

1. The midterm review (MTR) of the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) 2006-2009 was carried out during the first half of 2008. It drew on a wide range of information sources, including the latest available data on child-related indicators for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), information on progress towards MTSP targets, as well as major evaluations undertaken during the reporting period.

2. The analysis presented in this report was developed through a range of consultations that included feedback on the MTSP from all UNICEF field offices; questionnaire responses from United Nations Member States and UNICEF National Committees; workshops with key staff from field and headquarters offices; and in-depth reviews of the focus areas and cross-cutting strategies of the MTSP.

3. The MTR has provided the opportunity to take stock of achievements and shortfalls in relation to the strategic intent and planned key results of the MTSP; review emerging issues affecting children and women that need to be addressed through cooperation and collaborative partnerships; incorporate more strongly the issues that have emerged from the 2007 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR) of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/RES/62/208) and other new international commitments; and, based on these, identify necessary adjustments to the focus and results framework of the MTSP.

Feedback from consultations

4. Extensive consultations were undertaken on the validity, use and relevance of the current MTSP.

5. Responses to the questionnaire were received from 32 **Member States**, including 9 Executive Board members and 16 programme countries. A vast majority (90 per cent) of respondents indicated that the current MTSP significantly contributed to improving their understanding of UNICEF's work while noting the need to refine and clarify the links among the five focus areas. The majority of respondents agreed that the MTSP assisted in monitoring the work of the organization and enhanced their understanding of the strategic objectives of UNICEF. Almost all respondents felt that the design of the MTSP helped bring greater clarity to the roles that UNICEF plays in support of national development and in relation to other partners.

6. Most respondents stated that the MTSP results framework had helped in strengthening UNICEF focus on results and reporting. A number of areas for improvement were suggested: results management and performance monitoring; MTSP targets, indicators and baselines; and analysis, results focus and comprehensiveness in reporting.

7. Member States proposed a number of areas for greater consideration by UNICEF: migration; climate change; early recovery and humanitarian crisis prevention; violence against children; children under occupation; improvement of child nutrition; orphaned and disabled children; highly vulnerable and separated families; improving strategies for a human rights-based approach to cooperation (HRBA) and for gender equality; strengthening partnerships, including within the United Nations system; and greater focus on "upstream" policy work and national capacity-building.

8. A majority (58 per cent) of the 12 **National Committees** that provided feedback indicated that the design of the MTSP helped them communicate UNICEF's work to supporters, partners and to the general public. Focus area 5 was seen as particularly useful in shaping communication efforts. Most indicated that the MTSP helped only marginally in fundraising efforts but all National Committees stated that the MTSP guided their advocacy work for children's rights. They suggested that the MTSP should take into consideration climate change; advocacy for children's rights in industrialized countries; budgets as a tool for human rights; and the United Nations reform process.

9. A survey of all **UNICEF country offices** confirmed the usefulness of the present MTSP for working with partners to design, focus and review planned results for children. Most offices (59 per cent) indicated that all five focus areas were relevant to their respective national situation. Others indicated that the MTSP provided a relevant tool for highlighting disparities among different population groups. The most common recommendations for adjustments to the MTSP were: greater emphasis on adolescent health and development; promotion of holistic social and child protection systems; increased flexibility to respond to variations across countries; further internalizing United Nations coherence efforts; and reflecting better the new aid architecture, including the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

10. Self-assessment by country offices suggested that "partnerships for shared success" and the HRBA had been the MTSP strategies applied most effectively so far while the strategies for strengthening evaluation, gender equality and knowledge management needed improved application.

Emerging areas

11. *Climate change*, especially its impact on the survival, growth and development of children, is the most fundamental area to have grown in significance in the first two years of the MTSP. Following the adoption of the Bali Road Map and the assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 2007, reviews of evidence undertaken during the MTR confirm that children are among those most vulnerable to climate change.[1] Many risks can be avoided or mitigated by strengthening health systems and scaling up existing interventions. However, children's specific vulnerabilities, and their own potential to contribute to mitigation efforts, are often not explicitly acknowledged in environmental action plans.

12. *Urbanization* is a related phenomenon, as increasingly large numbers of children and families live in cities. While well-managed urban development is fundamental to socioeconomic progress and poverty reduction, urbanization has often been associated with widespread poverty and overcrowding, often masked by aggregate data. Deprivation is particularly widespread in regard to shelter and sanitation.[2] Other aspects include exposure to toxic substances, emerging diseases, injuries and accidents.

13. *Migration* is having a growing impact on children. While remittances have helped reduce poverty, in countries of origin the effects of brain drain and parental

[1] *Climate Change and Children: A Human Security Challenge* (New York and Florence: UNICEF, 2008); *Our Climate, Our Children, Our Responsibility* (London: UNICEF National Committee, 2008).

[2] David Gordon et al., *Child poverty in the developing world*, The Policy Press, Bristol, 2003.

absence have created new challenges. Country studies suggest that children left behind may be at greater risk of substance abuse, teenage pregnancy and psychosocial problems. Migrants frequently experience discrimination while children are particularly vulnerable to violence, abuse, exploitation and trafficking.

14. Responses to *armed conflicts* have to increasingly take into account both protracted internal conflicts and the post-conflict transitions of societies toward peace. Guided by humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law, these situations present both protection challenges and advocacy opportunities for children's rights.

15. There has been a growing sense that humanitarian action can only be effective if it is understood within a broader framework, encompassing not only preparedness and response, but also risk reduction, transition and recovery. This requires improving coherence among the various types of interventions — humanitarian, economic, political and security — anchored in national capacity development.

16. *The inter-agency context of humanitarian action* has evolved considerably. Emphasis is on improved coordination, more predictable financing and a strengthened Humanitarian Coordinator System. UNICEF is assuming significant responsibilities as the global lead for the nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) clusters and as co-lead for the education (with Save the Children) and emergency telecommunications clusters (with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [OCHA] and the World Food Programme [WFP]). UNICEF plays an active role in the health cluster and leads the sub-cluster on child protection.

Areas of continuity and key adjustments

17. UNICEF continues to respond to the changing external environment in its efforts to support national priorities. The drive for greater strategic focus, the emphasis on areas of its comparative advantage within the United Nations family, the move towards a greater emphasis on "upstream" support to national policies and a focus on capacity development across all sectors have all shown positive results. This is also the case with efforts to strengthen capacities for emergency preparedness and response, building on its Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies (CCCs) and lessons from major disasters; and the use of differentiated cooperation strategies in response to national priorities. The principles guiding the work of UNICEF — derived from its Mission Statement and key United Nations resolutions, including those on the TCPR — remain applicable, as described in the MTSP.

18. While the MTSP focus areas and key strategies remain relevant, significant refinements have been introduced within the existing framework, taking into account analysis from the MTR and recent evaluations, as well as the support strategies for the MTSP approved by the Executive Board.[3] These refinements include modifications to strategic focus, targets, indicators, areas of cooperation and planned evaluations, within each of the focus areas. Other adjustments have been

[3] The approved support strategies for the MTSP are: joint health and nutrition (adopted in 2006); water, sanitation and hygiene (2006); post-crisis transition (2006); education (2007); and child protection (2008).

made to "excellence in management and operations" components and key performance indicators used to assess organizational efficiency.

19. The revised results matrices for the focus areas and the modified Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (IMEF) are contained in the companion document on the revised annexes to the MTSP (E/ICEF/2008/19).

20. The key adjustments to the MTSP are summarized as follows:

(a) Further alignment with the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs, particularly in focus area 1. This will enhance the linkages among national priorities in UNICEF programmes of cooperation, developed within the context of the MTSP as part of the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs).

(b) Clear recognition of specific areas of cooperation already supported by UNICEF that have the potential to reduce risks and mitigate the effects of climate change and related emergencies on children. These areas include: household water; sanitation and hygiene; community water management; renewable energy sources; integrated health and nutrition approaches; disaster risk reduction; and preparedness planning. This adjustment will be coupled with the introduction of additional areas to be assisted by UNICEF through existing programmes, notably for health and water sector impact assessments; environmental education; awareness and local action among children; analysis of climate-related risks on children; and options for risk reduction and mitigation.

(c) Greater focus on addressing specific issues faced by children, young people and families in poor and underserved urban areas, through more systematic situation analysis and by strengthening partnerships with municipalities to promote "Child Friendly Cities".

Focus area 1

(d) Enhancing actions and partnerships to address poor nutrition among children and women. Reflecting its support for the MDG 1 hunger target, UNICEF will respond to wider threats to nutritional status, such as rising food prices.

(e) Mainstreaming of support to WASH interventions in the health and education sectors.

(f) Increasing the emphasis on intervention packages, incorporating key services for early childhood development (ECD), health, nutrition and WASH, for families in stable, emergency and post-crisis situations.

(g) Developing a new organizational target on maternal and neonatal health, to strengthen UNICEF work with partners in this area.

(h) Strengthening the use of communication to promote family and community behavioural change and social norms in favour of young child survival and development, together with further emphasis on support to national policy development and partnerships.

Focus area 2

(i) Greater focus on promotion of school readiness; disadvantages faced by children in education, including gender discrimination; incorporation of

environmental education as part of the CFS approach; and support of safe learning spaces and education sector rehabilitation.

Focus area 3

(j) Maintenance of the current framework, with minor revisions, to better reflect the "Four Ps" approach; greater efforts to address the challenges of national capacity for delivery of interventions and follow-up services to families; integration of the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT) and paediatric AIDS treatment into health systems; and the strengthening of HIV/AIDS services in emergencies, especially protection.

Focus area 4

(k) Regrouping of existing results areas on justice for children and services for vulnerable children and families, with greater emphasis on building of national systems, laws and policies; strengthening social norms and values to prevent violence, abuse and exploitation; and avoiding unnecessary separation among children.

Focus area 5

(l) Greater specification of the priority areas in which research, analysis and evidence-based advocacy for children and women will be promoted; more systematic support to situation analysis of children and women as a core UNICEF contribution to national knowledge and capacity for policy development.

(m) Experience-based review and revision of the CCCs.

(n) Reframing humanitarian action, to more explicitly encompass risk reduction, preparedness, response, recovery and transition; and giving greater emphasis in these areas to national capacity development and ownership, gender awareness and participation by affected communities.

(o) Improving the contribution of UNICEF to gender equality; further strengthening of the MTSP foundation strategy on the HRBA; developing an explicit cross-cutting strategy for communication for development; and introducing comprehensive approaches to knowledge and performance management.

(p) Updating the IMEF: planned "state of knowledge" studies on the consequences of climate change and urbanization on children will serve as a basis for development of the strategic role of UNICEF in relation to these issues. New high-priority studies, operational research and evaluation activities have been added in each of the focus areas, including an evaluation of the application of the HRBA in 2010.

(q) Reflection of the initial outputs of the current organizational improvement initiatives, the results of which will be progressively incorporated into the MTSP strategic framework.

(r) Updating and refining key performance indicators on: human resources; United Nations coherence; gender; information and communication technology; the HRBA; communication for development; risk management; and audit follow-up.

Focus area 1: Young child survival and development

Overview

21. During this period, the total number of deaths among children under five fell below 10 million for the first time. This progress reflects strong improvements in coverage for interventions, such as immunization, vitamin A and insecticide-treated mosquito nets (ITNs). Progress in areas requiring social or behavioural change such as exclusive breast-feeding and hygiene and sanitation is more mixed. Progress has been least satisfactory for services requiring a fully functional health system for delivery of more complex clinical interventions, such as treatment of pneumonia, malaria, diarrhoea, severe acute malnutrition and complications of labour and delivery — causes leading to high maternal and neonatal mortality.

22. In addition, progress for both maternal and child health is widely constrained by the high prevalence of conflicts and natural disasters and, in some countries, by HIV.

23. There is now an unprecedented interest in global health and many new global health partnerships and initiatives have been launched in the past two years. UNICEF will continue to aim to ensure that maternal, newborn and child survival, growth and development are central concerns of such initiatives.

Key achievements

24. The last few years have seen a strong decline in global measles deaths. Increased global awareness of malaria has contributed to a significant increase in resources, allowing a rapid scaling-up of malaria interventions in this period. Progress towards the hunger target of MDG 1, as assessed by trends in young child nutrition, has been very mixed.

25. The number of countries implementing Child Health Days, integrating the delivery of immunizations with other health and nutrition interventions, has nearly doubled since 2005. The number of countries achieving high vitamin A coverage and widespread household consumption of iodized salt has also increased.

26. In terms of the intervention packages, coverage for those interventions that can be described as "schedulable" — antenatal care, vitamin A supplementation, deworming, ITNs and immunization — have the strongest positive trends. National efforts to introduce and scale up programmes for the management of severe acute malnutrition have expanded rapidly since 2006. But few high-impact interventions, with the exception of immunization and vitamin A supplementation, are reaching more than two-thirds of children.

27. UNICEF focus on sanitation, water quality and hygiene at the household level has further increased. New communication initiatives, such as community-led total sanitation and open-defecation-free communities, are being introduced. Large-scale promotion of hand washing with soap is being promoted with success in several countries, often through public-private partnerships. Water safety plans have been introduced by key countries in Asia while home drinking water treatment has helped contain the spread of cholera in Africa. UNICEF support for reaching new water supply and sanitation users increased, with a focus on sustainability, in countries recovering from major crises. Together with partners, UNICEF is playing a growing role in supporting national capacity for policy reform and coordination.

28. Recent Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) evaluations show that UNICEF leadership in the WASH and nutrition clusters has been broadly effective, contributing to the humanitarian reform process.

Summary of enabling factors

29. Heightened political commitment and global and regional solidarity around child survival is mobilizing unprecedented levels of support.

30. Long-standing working relationships with governments and civil society, coupled with increased professional staff capabilities in the field and the ability to balance work on the ground with support to policy work at the national level, have underpinned progress in WASH.

31. UNICEF field presence has been used increasingly to support partners in the disaggregation of data, enabling the identification of communities that are lagging behind. This, in turn, facilitates policy dialogue and influences the investment of scarce resources by partners, including within the context of sector-wide approaches (SWAps).

Shortfalls and constraints

32. Coverage patterns reveal that the "continuum of care" approach is failing to fully reach mothers and children in many countries. Typically, relatively high coverage of interventions is achieved in the antenatal period, followed by a precipitous drop around childbirth and in the immediate post-partum period, before a gradual rise in the post-neonatal period.

33. Coverage for clinical interventions requiring a functional health system to deliver care "on demand" — for childbirth, case management of pneumonia, diarrhoea and malaria — is stagnating. Diarrhoeal diseases continue to account for nearly two million deaths a year among children under five years of age. Yet, the proportion of children under five with diarrhoea receiving oral rehydration therapy has increased only moderately in developing countries.

34. The mainstreaming of ECD in focus area 1 has presented no major problems. However, scale-up of successful community and family care practices continues to pose a major challenge due to lack of coordination between sectors and the need to strengthen the evidence on approaches that can improve care practices at scale.

35. The latest maternal mortality data shows that there has been little acceleration of progress towards MDG 5. Increasing access to family planning services and emergency obstetric care and the use of skilled birth attendants will be central to reducing maternal deaths and supporting maternal health.

36. While support for hygiene and sanitation promotion has intensified through the use of communication for development approaches, capacity for sanitation and hygiene remains weak and sustainability remains a concern.

37. Lack of assured long-term funding has limited sustainability of some successful programmes, such as vitamin A supplementation. Inclusion of costs for proven, high-impact interventions in national budgets and sector plans has proven challenging.

38. It has been especially difficult for countries to implement key nutrition interventions because successful results require coordination among different sector ministries. Greater prominence on the policy agenda may improve the effectiveness of partnership efforts in nutrition.

39. Children in the poorest 20 per cent of households are far more likely to die before their fifth birthday than those in the richest quintile. Ensuring access for all children to effective interventions — including new vaccines, artemisinin-based combination therapy, zinc and antibiotics — will be crucial to further progress.

Modifications in focus area 1

40. The modifications — responding to increasing challenges in child nutrition, including rising basic food prices — will better position UNICEF to take advantage of rapidly expanding opportunities in global health partnerships and to accelerate results. The modifications aim at:

(a) Further clarifying and articulating the contribution of UNICEF to the MDGs and to facilitate alignment with national priorities in the new aid environment;

(b) Strengthening linkages and synergies between health, nutrition and WASH;

(c) Sharpening the focus on communication for behavioural change.

41. The revisions in this focus area will further strengthen mainstreaming of ECD and maintain the necessary emphasis on key interventions in health, nutrition and WASH in both stable and emergency situations.

42. Other changes will help to link policy support work in individual sectors more closely with macro policy work under focus area 5; further rationalize UNICEF approaches to partnerships and invest in those with greatest potential for leveraging resources; maintain strong geographical focus on sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, with special attention to countries with large numbers of child deaths; and mainstream equity considerations and efforts to reach the most marginalized children.

43. Key results are now clearly linked with the relevant MDGs, underscoring the fact that the actions needed to achieve the Goals are interdependent. Each UNICEF-assisted country programme will consider the emphasis to be given to support for knowledge generation, policy and capacity development and service delivery, depending on national priorities and capacities.

44. Targets within the results areas reflect UNICEF support to service delivery through outreach, clinical and family/community packages. The emphasis on strengthening national systems and analysing the bottlenecks impeding scaling-up of services will provide important links with global partnerships.

45. New organizational targets are introduced specifically to address nutrition, based on new evidence that has emerged since the adoption of the MTSP and the joint health and nutrition support strategy.

46. A stronger emphasis will be placed on maternal and newborn health and the linkages of this area with support to PMTCT and paediatric HIV interventions. A new organizational target has been introduced in support of improved coverage. These linkages provide an important opportunity for joint programming.

47. Knowledge management will receive further emphasis, as envisaged by the joint health and nutrition support strategy. UNICEF will continue to draw on its field presence to contribute more systematically to the global evidence-base for policy development in child survival and development.

48. New areas of coopération have been added in disability and youth/adolescent health, areas of importance particularly in middle-income countries. Links will be strengthened between adolescent health and nutrition efforts and HIV prevention and life skills programmes.

49. The key results area for emergency response is retained, reflecting both the continuing response of UNICEF to crises and its extensive responsibilities under the cluster approach.

50. UNICEF will promote national health impact assessments of climate change and help countries to integrate these considerations into health sector planning. Support to country water safety plans will include assessments of climate risks and coping strategies.

51. Gender and human rights considerations are now reflected more explicitly in key indicators of this focus area. Wherever data allow, indicators will be monitored in a gender-disaggregated format and coverage levels for the poorest quintile will be calculated.

Focus area 2: Basic education and gender equality

Overview

52. Countries have continued to make progress in improving children's access to and completion of primary education. United Nations agencies and other partners within the Education for All (EFA) movement have been assisting countries, with increased success, to develop robust education sector plans for MDG 2 and to leverage long-term predictable financing for their implementation. Countries are increasingly building their plans on lessons learned from addressing school- and home-based barriers to access and completion.

53. Challenges persist on several fronts. While strong gains are being made in enrolment, progress towards primary completion is still constrained by high repetition and drop-out rates, especially in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. This requires more systematic investments in school readiness and strategic efforts to achieve quality learning. Programmes will support improvement of learning achievement as more children complete primary and make the transition to post-primary education. Restoring learning and helping to rebuild education systems in emergency and post-crisis situations has become critical. The MTSP will be adjusted to further facilitate collaboration with governments and other partners on education policy, legislation, and investment patterns that better ensure continued learning and education throughout childhood.

Key achievements

54. Major areas of progress so far have included standard-setting and policy development for early learning, parent education programmes and the launch of a global child-to-child approach, aimed at providing cost-effective school-readiness

interventions for young children. Work on national standards has helped countries to establish higher-quality, age-appropriate measures for early learning.

55. More countries are developing education sector plans that include specific measures to reduce gender and other disparities. Dynamic regional partnerships around the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) are providing support to country-level activities, focusing on the dissemination of knowledge and lessons learned on gender. At global level, UNGEI has effectively promoted the mainstreaming of gender in national plans to be endorsed under the EFA — Fast Track Initiative (FTI).

56. Through the School Fee Abolition Initiative, UNICEF has helped to strengthen the policy dialogue on the financial barriers to education access as a key strategy for reaching excluded children. The Essential Learning Package (ELP), designed to increase access and improve retention through rapid procurement of educational supplies, has been widely adopted in West and Central Africa.

57. The number of countries adopting or developing quality standards for primary education based on "child friendly schools" (CFS) and similar models has risen rapidly. There are some 20 documented country case studies, and a global evaluation of the approach is under way.

58. Life skills-based education now forms part of almost all national EFA action plans, and is increasingly being built into education-sector policies and plans.

59. The international humanitarian community has increasingly accepted education as a core part of emergency response, and greater attention is now being given to the education dimensions of emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction. The CCCs have facilitated the development of innovative strategies for restoring schooling to crisis-affected populations.

Enabling factors

60. By focusing on the reduction of disparities, UNICEF has strengthened its support to national partners in policy work and helped to build alliances around accelerated strategies for MDG 2. This has helped UNICEF lead in promoting analysis and response to disparities and in furthering the rights of marginalized children within education-sector planning, reform and coordination.

61. The expansion of access to post-primary education, especially for young women, over-age and disadvantaged young people is pursued through promoting alternative and non-formal education, integrated where possible with the formal education system.

62. Education quality has become a key concern because of its linkages with access, gender equity, learning achievement and ECD. Strategies to achieve results in quality education emphasize an integrated approach incorporating health, nutrition, water, sanitation, HIV prevention, and child protection. The CFS approach helps to address policy development as well as the overall learning environment and, with the promotion of life skills, encourages countries to make intersectoral efforts, tackling gender and other inequities.

Shortfalls and constraints

63. Although the improvement of young children's school readiness is one of the critical factors in reaching the MDGs, there is often little public sector investment. Stronger advocacy is needed on the benefits of ECD programmes. While the number of countries with national standards has risen rapidly, full scaling-up does not yet seem feasible for many least developed countries. However, lower-cost approaches, such as child-to-child, present possible solutions.

64. Significant progress by developing countries on access and gender parity remains overshadowed by high drop-out and low completion rates at primary level. The social exclusion suffered by children from disadvantaged backgrounds remains a key challenge.

65. The MTSP promotes the expansion of access to post-primary and post-basic education to reach previously-excluded groups. While non-formal and alternative education strategies are often the main route to learning for many such children, these options are still perceived as inferior with less-qualified teachers and staff and inadequate political and financial support. A key challenge lies in further strengthening the evidence base for CFS; scaling up successful practices; influencing policies and reforms; and building national capacities to use the approach.

66. Of further importance is strengthening national systems for quality data collection and improving the monitoring of learning achievement, including life skills. Progress here has continued to be slow.

67. Despite advances, ensuring access to learning in emergency and post-crisis contexts remains a major challenge. Limited funding affects education response, especially with regard to gender. The IASC education cluster is helping to mobilize more effective, predictable and timely preparedness and response, in partnership with the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies.

Modifications in focus area 2

68. Greater emphasis will be given to mainstreaming and scaling up good practices for results that promote gender equity and empowerment, as well as capacity-building in emergency and post conflict situations, ECD and quality education. UNICEF will prioritize work with the EFA partnership, especially the FTI, to promote inclusion and equity in education sector reforms.

69. UNICEF will promote the adoption of environmental education as part of the CFS approach, including participatory, school-based approaches and community actions to address local environmental conditions.

70. Increased focus will be placed on promoting inclusive education and learning systems, including through non-formal education, complementary and alternative learning programmes. UNICEF will further promote the use of mass media and technologies in primary and post primary schools, including the use of radio and computers where appropriate. Major improvement will be sought in the availability of indicators for measuring the elements of education quality. Current evaluations of CFS and life-skills initiatives will be used to sharpen strategies for quality learning.

71. Lessons from the ELP will be used to strengthen national capacities for procurement and distribution of school supplies and textbooks and to enhance

public/private partnerships. Strategies will be developed to link targeted interventions with social protection schemes for school access among excluded children.

72. UNICEF will review options such as mobile schools, distance learning and community schools more systematically with partners and will address more strongly the issues of curriculum, certification, teacher training and quality of learning spaces.

73. In line with the TCPR, more emphasis will be placed on strengthening inter-agency collaboration on national capacity development for education, including in the FTI and other education partnerships, using a rights-based approach.

74. Simple assessment tools for school readiness will be supported, including learning and cognition as well as children's health, nutritional status and emotional development.

75. The organization's niche in supporting the assessment of learning outcomes will centre on developing an assessment framework for providing children and parents with feedback on performance. This will provide a significant addition to internationally comparable assessment tests. UNICEF will continue to collaborate with UNESCO to provide support to countries promoting locally based assessment services.

76. There is growing urgency to accelerate interventions for transition to post-primary education taking into consideration the situation of large numbers of adolescents. A comprehensive approach will be developed that includes multiple innovations to provide education for adolescents out of school.

77. UNICEF will more clearly articulate its role in capacity-building and policy support for education in recovery and transition situations, including efforts to address gender and using the "build back better" concept.

Focus area 3: HIV/AIDS and children

Overview

78. Ensuring an AIDS-free generation is still a major challenge for the international community. According to the latest estimates:[4]

(a) Two million children under 15 are living with HIV. In 2007, 290,000 children died, often because they had no access to antiretroviral therapy;

(b) At least five million young people aged 15-24 are living with HIV;

(c) By 2010, it is likely that more than 20 million children will have lost one or both parents due to AIDS.[5]

[4] UNAIDS/WHO, unpublished estimates, 2007.

[5] *Africa's Orphaned and Vulnerable Generations: Children Affected by AIDS*, UNICEF, New York, 2006, p. 35.

Key achievements

79. Launched in 2005, the *Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS* campaign has provided a platform for UNICEF to put the missing face of children at the centre of the global fight against AIDS, encompassing leadership, programme, advocacy, fundraising and monitoring activities.

80. The specificity of each key result area and the action orientation of the "Four Ps" have enabled UNICEF to focus on outcomes and accountability. The needs of children who face the HIV pandemic and the best ways of responding to them are now better understood by the international community and the public.

81. Improved estimation from national systems shows progress in the numbers of HIV-positive pregnant women receiving antiretroviral prophylaxis to reduce the risk of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, in the numbers of children receiving treatment and access among orphaned and vulnerable children to education.

82. Meanwhile, rapid HIV testing and counselling in antenatal and delivery settings are increasing the number of women who know their HIV status and can benefit from PMTCT and other HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services. There have been gains in strengthening the capacity of national health systems to identify HIV-infected infants for treatment through routine testing of sick children.

83. Continued and increasing availability of and advocacy for the use of fixed-dose generic antiretroviral combinations and better forecasting of paediatric drug needs have made it possible for many more countries to provide antiretroviral therapies for children. However, relatively few children have so far benefited from life-saving antiretroviral therapy (ART). Cotrimoxazole coverage is likewise very limited.

84. The third Global Partners Forum on Children Affected by HIV/AIDS in 2006 identified several priorities for protection and support to orphans and vulnerable children: promotion of civil registration for access to social services; support for social protection measures; and reduction in education costs. Although national plans of action are still underfunded, NGOs are providing essential support to significant numbers of these children.

85. By 2006, evidence suggested that behaviour change programmes had begun to contribute to declines in HIV prevalence among young people. There is recognition that targeting at-risk adolescents and young people is critical and often more effective than efforts among the general population.

Enabling factors

86. There is now much greater involvement of other agencies in paediatric HIV care. The United States President's Emergency Plan (PEPFAR), the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the Clinton Foundation and UNITAID, the international drug purchase facility, have made significant financial and technical contributions to scaling up access to paediatric HIV treatment.

87. Much of the improvement is the result of antiretroviral drug price reductions. Family-centred approaches have helped increase children's access to HIV services at treatment sites. There is still a need to scale up HIV testing for children and to improve practices on consent, disclosure and psychosocial support.

88. AIDS has put a spotlight on the often-neglected support needs of orphans and other vulnerable children. Donors are providing funds for children affected by AIDS, and national governments are recognizing their responsibilities. Moving from support to individual children to strengthening the resilience of families remains a challenge, but pilot programmes in micro-credit and direct cash transfers are showing positive results. Partners have recognized the need to integrate AIDS-focused efforts with other initiatives, such as EFA.

89. UNAIDS and its cosponsors and partners have made real progress in developing a division of labour. Inter-agency task teams now bring a broad range of agencies together to set norms and standards for HIV/AIDS interventions, identify priorities and coordinate support to national efforts and systems. The teams are proving to be an effective mechanism for disseminating knowledge and experience of interventions in support of scaled-up national programmes.

Shortfalls and constraints

90. The expansion of PMTCT services is on track in many countries. However, it is clear that potential shortfalls persist in relation to MTSP targets in the areas of HIV prevention and support to orphans and other vulnerable children.

91. The meaningful participation of young people in prevention and protection programmes requires greater attention. Innovative approaches are needed to provide adolescents and young people with accurate and relevant information about sexual and reproductive health and HIV transmission, as well as opportunities to build risk-reduction skills. These should be tied to appropriate HIV prevention, including voluntary counselling and testing, condom use, harm reduction and male circumcision.

92. There is a need to conduct more systematic checks to find out whether interventions are leading to real results for children. The collection and disaggregation of AIDS-related data by age group and sex is effective in making children more central to the global response.

93. The formal curricula of education systems, especially life-skills, are playing an increasingly important role in HIV prevention. However, decision-makers need better information on young people's behaviours to enable them to respond to new risk groups and phases of the epidemic.

94. Domestic and gender-based violence can be significant impediments for voluntary HIV testing. There is a need for improved measures to combat AIDS-related stigma and discrimination, including as part of child protection policies and programmes. Women and young people exposed to violence because of their HIV status need to be protected.

95. The provision of information to young people in emergency situations about HIV transmission and prevention is the CCC for this focus area which is most frequently implemented. Commitments to provide post-rape kits and provide health care workers with training on post-rape health and psychosocial care have been much more difficult to implement. At the same time, additional interventions are already being supported in some situations, particularly support to ART and PMTCT services.

Modifications in focus area 3

96. Stocktaking reports covering 2006-2007 suggest that no major changes are needed in current strategies and activities. UNICEF will now build on the results achieved in the "Four Ps" and will continue to use its competencies and voice to help support the necessary prioritization of the needs of children and young people in national policies, planning and implementation.

97. The key challenge for the forthcoming period is building on the attention generated by "children affected by AIDS" to strengthen community, national and global initiatives to help vulnerable children and to eliminate any stigmatizing discrimination between AIDS-affected children and others who are in need. UNICEF will develop further guidance on enhanced protection and assist countries in applying these principles to their individual situations. AIDS services in emergencies, especially protection, will need further attention.

98. The accelerating expansion of PMTCT services allows for optimism that a significant number of countries will reach 2010 targets. Additional measures will be required to strengthen procurement and supply management, human resources, infrastructure and integration among programmes. The expansion of a family-centred approach will require the continuing reinforcement of partnerships in support of service delivery institutions.

99. UNICEF will more systematically promote and advocate for the integration of PMTCT and Paediatric AIDS treatment with health system strengthening, maternal and child health, child survival, child protection and other initiatives.

100. In partnership with UNFPA and other agencies, UNICEF will support the development of strong overall approaches to HIV prevention for all at-risk groups and will continue to play a key role in supporting communication, community mobilization and participatory monitoring systems.

101. New evidence on the effectiveness of male circumcision as a measure for reducing HIV transmission will modify elements of this focus area. UNICEF participates in the WHO-led task force helping countries to introduce male circumcision as part of a comprehensive prevention programme.

102. UNICEF will continue to support countries in improving data availability on the spread of HIV and in assessing the impact of programmes. It will strengthen its advocacy for evidence-based prevention strategies and efforts to help national partners ensure that available resources from sources such as the Global Fund, the World Bank and PEPFAR are adequately programmed and implemented and their results monitored.

103. One of the major lessons learned during the first two years of the current MTSP is that interventions to support children affected by HIV and AIDS must be integrated into measures to reinforce health, education and social protection systems. In countries where adult prevalence is more than 12 per cent, nearly the entire UNICEF programme of cooperation is focused on HIV-affected children and their families. In these nine countries, therefore, activities in support of the scaling up of cotrimoxazole coverage and of the integration of services and health system strengthening in focus area 1 will be classified and coded as HIV/AIDS expenditures. The same procedure will be followed for life-skills based Education in focus area 2 and social protection activities in focus area 4.

Focus area 4: Child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse

Overview

104. Child protection is better supported by legislation and enforcement systems. Many countries are strengthening their institutional capacities, with a growing understanding of the importance of systemic approaches to protection and the centrality of legal and social welfare systems in addressing social norms. New measurement tools are being applied, leading to advances in data collection and monitoring, and a more systemic approach is being developed for child protection in emergencies.

105. Traditionally, protection has not formed part of the development agenda, but the link between protection and outcomes for development is increasingly understood. All countries face some gaps in child protection, many linked to sociocultural traditions, poverty or governance. The best solutions often involve structural or institutional change.

106. Preliminary findings of the UNICEF child protection meta-evaluation, launched in 2007, suggest that the organization's most effective role lies in strengthening government commitments through national plans and policies, and helping partners to build legislative frameworks. This evaluation, together with the Child Protection Strategy in support of the MTSP, will refine the strategic approach and focus of UNICEF.

Key achievements

107. UNICEF has supported collection and analysis of data on child protection in a record number of countries. Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), Demographic Health Surveys (DHS) and other national surveys provided data on the child protection issues.[6]

Number of countries for which child protection data are available (2005-2007)

	Number of countries		
Child protection data available on:	*2005*	*2006*	*2007*
Birth registration	73	75	101
Child labour	72	76	98
Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)	19	22	27
Child marriage	69	72	93
Violence against children — child discipline	—	—	29
Domestic violence — attitudes	—	—	57
Disabilities	—	—	22

108. Advances in the oversight of child protection issues have been considerable, with UNICEF support for: developing and refining country-relevant indicators;

[6] Data is accessible at http://www.unicef.org/progressforchildren/2007n6/index_41843.htm.

child protection databases and observatories; and building national capacity for monitoring.

109. There are significant improvements in national policies and international commitments on child protection, spurred by the United Nations Study on Violence against Children (2006), which exposed the scale and impact of all forms of violence against children, and by the Paris Conference "Free Children from War", which yielded knowledge on programming with and for children associated with armed groups. Monitoring and reporting mechanisms on grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict were established in a dozen countries in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1612.

110. Several countries have enacted legislation related to violence against children, or have harmonized their domestic legislation with the Convention, its Optional Protocols and other treaties. In 2007, 37 governments implemented the United Nations Guidelines on Justice in Matters Involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime in full, and 55 partially; many are using the recommended indicators on children in conflict with the law.

111. A United Nations Common Approach to Justice for Children has been adopted. In this regard, UNICEF promotes a comprehensive approach that includes law development, standard setting, capacity-building and service delivery, and the reduction of deprivation of liberty through alternative measures for dealing with children. UNICEF has supported specific initiatives to improve judicial procedures for child victims and witnesses of sexual abuse and exploitation.

112. A coordinated strategy in 26 countries for the abandonment of FGM/C continues to yield important insights into the dynamics of social change. Programme evaluations in Senegal show significant and sustained reductions in FGM/C. UNICEF is exploring the application of this approach to other harmful practices, such as child marriage and son preference.

113. While the widespread abuse of children in conflict has not abated, there are improvements in monitoring and reporting mechanisms and in social support to children affected by armed conflict. Efforts to ban cluster munitions have grown into a global movement. UNICEF has continued to fulfil a critical role in support of policy and implementation in emergencies, including by heading the protection sub-cluster on children and frequently taking the lead on protection as a whole in the response to natural disasters.

114. With regard to MTSP targets relating to alternative care, family reunification programmes have registered significant success in many countries, closely tied to the overall strengthening of child protection systems. UNICEF estimates that at least two million children are currently living in institutional care around the world.

115. With respect to birth registration, civil registrars are increasingly stationed in health facilities, and registration forms part of early childhood, immunization and other health campaigns. These are positive developments, but improvement in coverage rates remains uneven.

116. Continued growth has been seen in social protection for the most vulnerable families, including through the cash and social transfers as part of local government family services. Experience and lessons from South America have been used for programmes in other regions. Close linkages have been established between focus

areas 4 and 5, to integrate child protection with social protection initiatives. UNICEF will further develop partnerships to support national efforts in this area, including with the African Union, HelpAge, Save the Children, the World Bank and ILO.

Enabling factors

117. UNICEF technical leadership and collaborative relationships have contributed to the intensification of national efforts. Multi-sectoral approaches were commonly applied, and the documentation of quality programmes has helped to establish new knowledge.

118. A wide range of stakeholders — including religious and community leaders, grassroots organizations, and children themselves — have been active advocates on child protection. Greater interagency collaboration and consensus in child protection, often with NGOs, is evident, as demonstrated through the United Nations Study on Violence against Children, the Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice and the Better Care Network.

119. At the request of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF is working with many governments, NGOs, children and child rights expert in the development of draft guidelines on alternative care. The common approach to justice for children has further positioned UNICEF as a partner, able to leverage support, in the context of better definition of the role of the United Nations in rule of law and security sector reform. UNICEF has strongly promoted a child-sensitive view of social protection and has recognized the need to help countries strengthen their social welfare institutions.

120. Cross-sectoral guidance on mainstreaming attention to children with disabilities was issued in 2007, soon after the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Although this area is benefiting from growing political support and inter-agency attention, more systematic integration of children with disabilities is needed in sector programmes and services.

Shortfalls and constraints

121. National technical capacity and funding for child protection need to strengthen, as does awareness of the importance of good protection to children's health, education and equity.

122. Even as more national data on child protection becomes available, progress is slow, particularly in terms of baselines and data disaggregation. Here, too, limited technical capacity compounds the inherent difficulty of gathering information on issues that are often concealed. Few Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs), national development plans or their equivalents include child protection data.

123. Although good examples exist, situation analyses on the status of child protection are often weak. Experiences in juvenile justice confirm that investing in such analyses can influence policy.

124. Few countries have carried out a full review of their legal frameworks and enforcement practices for protecting children against violence. Progress in legal reform has often focused narrowly on particular manifestations of violence.

125. The release and reintegration of children in conflict is often still subject to the conclusion of wider agreements. Most funding contributions have been small and of short duration, making it difficult to sustain these efforts. Attention in emergency responses to justice for children and gender issues, promoted by the protection cluster, should be more systematic. The application of relevant international humanitarian law and human rights instruments in emergency contexts remains weakly understood.

Modifications in focus area 4

126. The formulation and grouping of the key results have been modified to reflect current good practices and the child protection support strategy. Adjustments to targets and indicators will give more emphasis to building up national systems; promoting social norms that encourage children protection; and addressing immediate and longer-term impacts of conflicts and natural disasters. Other adjustments will be made in line with ongoing revisions to the CCCs.

127. Building on lessons learned, UNICEF will continue to be a catalyst, a convenor to accelerate approaches that strengthen the protective environment for children in all settings, namely strengthening national protection systems; encouraging protective social norms; addressing child protection in situations of conflict and natural disasters; evidence-building and knowledge management.

128. UNICEF will make efforts to promote monitoring systems, including with civic participation, and to integrate child protection indicators in MICS and DevInfo as part of national and regional strategies to improve monitoring. UNICEF will place more emphasis on situation analysis, and on using relationships with academia and other partners to generate, share and use high quality knowledge and analysis on protection issues. The Better Care Network is an example of a public source of innovations in many areas of social protection and welfare.

129. Besides strengthening existing staff capacities, enhancing skills in social policy and social change will be increasingly important. UNICEF will consider how best to respond to calls to take on broader roles in humanitarian protection, particularly in natural disasters.

Focus area 5: Policy advocacy and partnerships for children's rights

Overview

130. The MTSP focus area 5 goal is articulated as "*strengthen[ing] the capacities of States and societies to design and implement social and economic policies, legislative measures and budgetary allocations that enable them to meet their obligations*" under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

131. UNICEF is pursuing this objective by supporting the collection of data and information on the rights and well-being of children and women to inform strategic decision making; promoting research and policy analysis on children and women; engaging in advocacy and policy dialogue with decision makers based on evidence; and supporting participation by children and young people.

132. Certain key considerations led to the inclusion of focus area 5 in the MTSP:

(a) To support national capacity development, UNICEF must shift the emphasis of its cooperation from backing projects with limited coverage to assisting countries in formulating policies and plans with adequate focus on children and women;

(b) National ownership and capacity development must encompass not merely the public sector but societies as a whole, encouraging participation in policy development and implementation;

(c) UNICEF needs to engage with and support national partners in macro level and cross-sectoral policy development, legal reforms and budgeting, to promote an enabling environment for the realization of children's rights.

133. While it is difficult to comprehensively assess achievements in focus area 5 after only two years of implementation, the documented breadth of UNICEF engagement, advocacy and partnerships on policies conducive to and protective of children's rights, including through field offices and National Committees, confirms a widespread commitment to the aims of the focus area. Many initiatives are strategically oriented and some have already yielded significant results. Areas such as support to household surveys and the use of situation analysis have drawn on decades of prior UNICEF experience. Given this progress, and the centrality of nationally-owned policies to ensuring sustained results for children, UNICEF will continue to strengthen its efforts in this focus area.

Key achievements

134. In the result area to collect and analyse strategic information on the situation of children and women, UNICEF has provided leadership in supporting dissemination of up-to-date data, information and knowledge on children and women, as well as disaggregation to identify equity issues and excluded populations. Key achievements include:

(a) Support to MICS in 56 countries in 2005-2006; MICS together with Demographic and Health Surveys provide the largest single source of information for monitoring the MDGs;

(b) Indicator development to track progress, including through the "Countdown to 2015" initiative on child survival;

(c) A series of global databases on children and women, updated annually. UNICEF provided leadership in interagency monitoring groups, helping to build national statistical capacity and developing joint estimates;

(d) Data dissemination through DevInfo, currently used by 103 countries as their national platform for MDG monitoring, with 172 customized versions so far launched; and the piloting of EmergencyInfo in several countries.

135. UNICEF has made progress in establishing internal knowledge management systems and further increased its support to CRC reporting processes and for implementation of the concluding observations of the Committees on the CRC and CEDAW. In 12 industrialized countries, National Committees engaged in the CRC reporting process, often in conjunction with national NGO coalitions.

136. In addition to revitalizing its overall support to national situation analysis on children and women, UNICEF promotion of research for advocacy, dialogue and resource leveraging has largely focused on six emerging priority areas. UNICEF has been involved in one or more of these areas in over 100 countries:

(a) *Child poverty and disparities*. Policy-related research and analysis has been carried out in more than 60 countries in support of policy dialogue around national development plans and PRSs. Support has been given to parliamentary and civil society participation in poverty monitoring. The 2007 Innocenti Report Card *Child poverty in perspective: An overview of child well-being in rich countries* received extensive attention from policy makers, media and children around the world;

(b) *Decentralization*. Work is being supported in some 25 countries. UNICEF has been helping to strengthen civic participation in planning at the local level and to understand the impact of fiscal decentralization on children. In some 32 countries, UNICEF has helped promote "Child Friendly Cities" as an approach to strengthening child rights and participation at the municipal level. In East Asia and the Pacific, UNICEF forms part of an interagency effort to study the implications of decentralization on social development in five countries, together with UNDP, UNCDF and UNESCO;

(c) *Social Protection*. UNICEF is collaborating with partners in more than 35 countries to support the design and scale-up of national social protection systems. Regional Offices in Latin America and the Caribbean and West and Central Africa are carrying out analyses on social protection and children and a strategic framework has been adopted to guide UNICEF work in Eastern and Southern Africa. A study on cash transfers in emergencies was supported in Indonesia and Thailand, and will inform applicability of this approach, globally;

(d) *Social Budgeting*. UNICEF is working in over 30 countries with governments and research institutions to analyse public expenditure on services for children, highlighting gaps and suggesting policy options. In some countries, such as India and Paraguay, UNICEF has supported national and local governments to overcome bottlenecks in budget implementation and to make budget processes more participatory and accountable;

(e) *Migration*. UNICEF and its partners in the United Nations Global Migration Group help to ensure that children benefit from migration and are protected from its risks. In over ten countries, UNICEF is supporting research to assess the impact of migration and remittances on children left behind. A framework has been drafted for UNICEF advocacy in favour of asylum-seekers, migrants and victims of trafficking. A cross-country analysis on the situation of children in immigrant families is underway, as well as research on the migration experiences of children themselves;

(f) *Holistic legislative reform*. Achievements in this area have included a pioneering publication on the challenges of implementing the CRC in different legal systems, as well as advocacy and technical support to countries to formulate or adapt national legislation consistent with the CRC. Other efforts have included the use of Child Rights Indices, support to children's observatories in several countries and engagement with the European Union on policy development and strategies for children's rights.

137. In the result area for enhanced participation, UNICEF has supported the participation and voice of children and young people in major global events and the formation of national youth policies, children's parliaments, youth advisory councils and inventories of participation mechanisms available for children. In industrialized countries, national committees on development education work promotes opportunities for children and young people to participate in decisions, through activities such as internet discussion groups, school governance, public awareness events and child experts panels.

Enabling factors

138. Focus area 5 has facilitated UNICEF "upstream" advocacy and policy support work, across all focus areas of the MTSP. Implementation has built upon the organization's extensive experience with the collection of child data, situation analysis and supporting civil society participation, as well as its specific role and involvement with the Convention and Committee on the Rights of the Child. The receipt of initial thematic funding has enabled acceleration of work in all regions.

139. More broadly, the 2007 TCPR, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and increasing demand from Member States have all reinforced the need for UNICEF, together with other members of United Nations country teams, to provide high-quality support for capacity development and policy work. In middle-income countries, UNICEF offices have increasingly supported national monitoring and analysis on children and women and the mobilization of country capacities and resources for the most vulnerable children.

140. UNICEF and National Committees have succeeded in raising interest in children's issues by providing more effective and tailored presentations of the results of household surveys, research findings and situation analyses, through both flagship and specialized publications and dissemination channels.

141. Increased recruitment of staff with expertise in economic and social policy and large-scale staff training have underpinned the initial work in this focus area. However, there are still limitations of staff capacity to support countries in child-focused policy analysis and advocacy.

Shortfalls and constraints

142. An initial qualitative assessment of shortfalls highlights the need for further work on developing indicators and data collection in some target areas, including youth participation and the CCCs.

143. While UNICEF is often quite effective in advocating on specific issues, partnership opportunities in advocacy for children are not yet identified systematically enough to make full strategic use of the mandate and capacities of UNICEF.

144. UNICEF is so far working on decentralization in only a few countries. There is a particular need for collaboration to support countries which are shifting the responsibility for child-related services from central to local governments and municipalities.

145. Interventions aimed at fulfilling the rights of adolescents and young people are frequently narrow and lack an integrated perspective. A problem-focused approach

tends to dominate national youth policies and interventions, rather than one that enables adolescents to develop their skills for a positive transition to adulthood. Programming for and with adolescents and young people is stronger for specific problems, such as child labour and gender-based violence. In crisis and post-crisis situations, the needs and rights of young people, as well as their potential for contributing to positive change, tend to remain overlooked. Advocacy is needed for greater attention to the development and participation of adolescents and young people across all sectors.

Modifications in focus area 5

146. Policy analysis and advocacy priorities will increasingly focus on the six emerging areas described above, working with national partners in support of national priorities. These link to all other focus areas of the MTSP, and have emerged as key determinants of children's rights and equity across many countries and regions. UNICEF engagement options will be further developed for each area, depending on the country situation and national priorities. An overall strategic approach and research agenda on the use of policy advocacy for children's rights will be developed.

147. UNICEF contributions in these areas will continue to form part of efforts to support the strengthening of national policies, systems and institutions oriented toward universal realization of children's rights, based on national ownership and country capacity development. In addition, greater emphasis will be placed on partnerships on children's and women's issues with cross-sectoral ministries, such as those of finance and planning, and with parliamentarians, municipal authorities and community-based organizations. Stronger cooperation will be forged with organizations that support civic engagement among adolescents to help them in making the transition to adulthood.

Cross-cutting strategies of the MTSP

Human rights-based approach to cooperation and gender equality

148. The review of the HRBA to cooperation was based on a sample of UNICEF country annual reports and all country programme documents (CPDs) approved by the Executive Board during the period.

149. The adoption of a shared understanding on the HRBA among United Nations partners in 2003 and the gradual operationalization of the United Nations Secretary-General's "Action 2 Initiative" at the country level has facilitated work on outputs, such as common learning packages on both human rights and gender. The expanded field presence of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights as part of United Nations country teams has led to improved support to governments, including on human rights perspectives and analysis in national strategies.

150. The introduction of focus area 5 in the current MTSP has allowed application of HRBA to issues of public policy. Key examples are found in focus area 1, to reach marginalized families and in a renewed emphasis on health equity. Similarly, in focus area 2, there has been greater emphasis on assisting national education-sector plans, to include specific measures to address the needs of ethnic minorities or people living with disabilities. Across all focus areas, including in emergencies,

HRBA is reflected through a more consistent use of disaggregated data, to assess progress among different population groups.

151. In half of the reports reviewed, the focus area with the strongest overall reflection of the HRBA was child protection, where the promotion of a protective environment is strongly oriented towards reducing disparities. However, in this and other areas, the HRBA could be further strengthened by increased participation among young people in policy and programme design and implementation. Focus area 5 showed strong links in another third of assessed reports. Focus areas 1 and 3 would gain from further strengthening of the HRBA.

152. CPDs for 2006 and 2007 showed an adequate, though not strong, performance after tightening of the review criteria in 2007. There is some concern over the extent to which references to marginalized and disadvantaged groups in situation analysis are carried forward into programme results.

153. There has been a further improvement during this MTSP period in support of national reporting on the CRC, and UNICEF has provided strong support to global initiatives, such as the new Universal Periodic Review mechanism of the Human Rights Council and the development and implementation of the new Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

154. Based on the progress made, the following steps will be pursued to strengthen the HRBA:

(a) Continue to update the HRBA with partners and provide more specific guidance on its application — particularly in emergency contexts, PRSs, SWAps and budgets;

(b) Focus on equity and excluded groups across all MTSP focus areas, backed by greater use of disaggregated data and analysis;

(c) Strengthen quality assurance and support to the use of HRBA in situation analyses, CPDs and country programme action plans; and continue to work with partners, including the United Nations Staff College, to support its application in the UNDAF process;

(d) Increase staff capacity, through a strengthened HRBA component in core training, the "Action 2" Common Learning Package;

(e) Consolidate the knowledge base for working with indigenous and minority children and their communities;

(f) Build a stronger, mutually supportive relationship with the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Gender mainstreaming

155. This MTR took place as UNICEF prepared its response to an evaluation of its gender policy implementation. This provides a unique opportunity to significantly improve performance in this area.

156. The 2007 State of the World's Children report, *Women and Children: The Double Dividend of Gender Equality*, made a significant statement of commitment to gender equality, spurred action at the country level and raised UNICEF profile in gender. Despite this, the reflection of gender in programming remains relatively

weak. The external review of CPDs for 2007 concluded that "the majority of CPDs reviewed performed poorly on this cross-cutting theme". There has been a marked increase during the MTSP period in the number of offices supporting national reporting on the CEDAW. However, the continued slow implementation of gender reviews and self-assessments of UNICEF-assisted country programmes remains a concern.

157. The analysis found little correlation in performance on use of the HRBA with gender mainstreaming, suggesting that the intended mutual reinforcement between the two is not being widely achieved. Guidance and training materials on the relation between the CRC and CEDAW will be implemented as part of the follow-up to the gender evaluation.

158. While field reporting on focus area 1 retains a clear emphasis on women — and mothers in particular — there is little specific reference to girls or to boys and men, suggesting a weak application of a gender lens to cooperation in this area. By contrast, there is strong consideration of the rights of girls in UNICEF cooperation in education. The emphasis within focus area 2 on gender equality and quality issues is further strengthened by the UNGEI, which promotes the use of gender audits, gender budgeting and advocacy for the inclusion of girls and boys, including in emergency response and recovery.

159. The role of men and boys appears relatively more clearly in focus area 3. Reporting on focus area 4 shows comparatively strong attention to women but less reflection of the differing protection challenges facing girls and boys, except on the issues of juvenile justice and child labour. Focus area 5 shows relatively strong incorporation of gender, founded in part on data disaggregation and the emphasis on gender in situation analysis and policy work.

160. A comprehensive gender action plan for UNICEF will respond to, and go beyond, the key recommendations of the gender evaluation, encompassing action in five main areas:

(a) Updating the gender policy;

(b) Strengthening gender components in the programming processes;

(c) Building staff capacity;

(d) Strengthening accountability at all levels;

(e) Allocating adequate human and financial resources.

161. UNICEF response will be fully aligned with the 2007 TCPR. In line with the emphasis of the TCPR on inter-agency collaboration, UNICEF will continue to intensify its work with United Nations partners, for example in implementing a joint mandatory e-learning package on gender in programming.

Communication for development

162. Communication for development, also known as programme communication, was highlighted in the 2006-2009 MTSP as a key cross-cutting strategy.

163. The majority of the MTSP targets are strongly dependent on behavioural and social changes for their impact and sustainability. The UNICEF Organizational Review identified communication for development as an area requiring

strengthening, given the centrality of such changes to realizing results and the rights of children and women. It will now be integrated in the MTSP as a key element both within each focus area and as a cross-cutting strategy in itself, closely linked to HRBA and gender equality.

164. In 2006, following responses to the threats posed by avian influenza, UNICEF began to reinvigorate its work and capacity in communication for development as a vital dimension of development and humanitarian assistance, as well as current inter-agency efforts to mainstream communication in UNDAFs.

165. A review of field reports indicates that communication is already helping to: strengthen community voices and connect them to policy advocacy; motivate civil society, community- and faith-based organizations; and engage parents and communities to foster positive attitudes and practices. Other positive effects include improved interpersonal skills among health workers.

166. UNICEF will now focus on key areas where communication strategies can play a major facilitating and catalytic role for change. These include exclusive breastfeeding; diarrhoea management; immunization coverage; use of ITNs; hand washing; safe water and hygiene practices; norms relating to violence in schools and other follow-up actions on the United Nations Study on Violence against Children; and reducing young people's risks and vulnerability to HIV infection. Under focus area 5, communication efforts will aim to support community contributions to policy development.

167. Methods will include: evidence-based planning in support of programmes and advocacy, as well as community participation in the design of communication approaches; research on socio-economic and cultural barriers and factors enabling change; and mobilization for sustained results. UNICEF will encourage a stronger reliance in its cooperation on inter-personal communication and local capacity-building, together with the strategic use of mass media. UNICEF will promote the communication for development technical capacities of staff, partners and counterparts through online and face-to-face training.

Results-based management

168. As confirmed by the 2007 report, *Assessing Results Management in UNICEF*, progress has been made in developing results-based planning and management (RBM) systems and practices, including through the strengthening of the MTSP itself as a results-based planning framework (see also the Annual Report of the Executive Director [E/ICEF/2008/10]).

169. The external review of CPDs found that planned results generally demonstrated consistency with UNDAF key outcomes. The RBM approach has now been extended to the UNICEF biennial support budget. UNICEF, working with UNDP and UNFPA, is further refining the targets and the indicators used to monitor performance against the functions of the support budget.

170. MTSPInfo was introduced in 2006 as the corporate database for monitoring UNICEF performance and indicators and is being further developed. The Data Companion to the Annual Report of the Executive Board is now a regular feature of reporting on the MTSP.

171. An organizational improvement project on performance management is being undertaken to systematically strengthen the RBM approach by improving and consolidating tools, oversight mechanisms and key indicators. A number of "dashboard" type systems are already in use for monitoring key programme and management indicators. Among the gaps that will be addressed is the lack of a clear organizational strategy for linking monitoring and reporting on results to analysis of performance and the proactive use by managers of the information available.

172. There are inherent challenges in attributing results that form part of nationally owned priorities and wider outcomes for children, while reflecting the concrete but normally limited contributions made by UNICEF among other partners. This challenge is particularly acute in results areas focused on capacity-building, behavioural change and knowledge-based advocacy for policy development. UNICEF will continue to support the monitoring of wider results achieved by national and cooperating partners and address these challenges by defining key areas of capacity, policy or legislation that UNICEF aims to strengthen in favour of children's rights.

173. While monitoring of organizational targets and indicators will continue to be the main approach to assess UNICEF performance, evaluations are used to illustrate what works and whether UNICEF is helping to make an impact at the country level. The IMEF of the MTSP has been updated, based on experience during the first two years (see companion document [E/ICEF/2008/19]). Progress against the planned activities is shown in the Board report on the evaluation function (E/ICEF/2008/21).

Generation and use of knowledge, including good practices and lessons learned

174. The MTSP originally focused largely on knowledge generation on children's issues, with less attention to knowledge management and use. The latter is now the focus of a major organizational improvement initiative. Significant advances have been made since 2005 in the management and communication of knowledge. Overall accountability and functions within UNICEF have been clarified and consolidated.

175. UNICEF has introduced new web-based tools for improved communication and knowledge sharing on aid effectiveness, policy research and child advocacy. Considerable work has been done in each of the MTSP focus areas to organize and disseminate reference materials and guidance to UNICEF staff, including improved access to state-of-the-art scientific information.

176. UNICEF is working closely with other agencies on implementing knowledge management strategies, engaging with leading research institutions in areas such as health equity and evaluation. The Innocenti Research Centre has continued to produce a wide range of research publications. Field offices are beginning to incorporate knowledge management for children as part of their core functions and to develop cooperation to build national capacities for analysis.

177. UNICEF has strengthened its systems for documenting, making accessible and using lessons learned. A website has been launched to assess and facilitate the use of these knowledge assets. Evaluations are assessed and disseminated through the global evaluation and research database and meta-analyses of existing evaluations will be undertaken on specific themes. Document, records and archives management is now being addressed through increased investments.

178. Despite these recent advances, more systematic and open means of fostering professional collaboration are needed, both internally and with partners. UNICEF is piloting the "communities of practice" approach, successfully used in many private and public sector organizations, including UNDP.

179. A comprehensive UNICEF knowledge management strategy will be finalized in 2008. This will include the development of learning materials and opportunities for staff on knowledge generation, management and sharing, and their roles and responsibilities.

Partnerships for shared success

United Nations coherence

180. Following the recommendations of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence, eight pilot countries are pursuing the "Delivering as One" initiative, aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of programme cooperation among United Nations system agencies. Experiences and progress made by these countries is followed with interest by United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies.

181. Since 2005, UNICEF has accomplished much as part of the Chief Executives Board (CEB) and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and as a leader in promoting United Nations coherence at all levels. These included a document, "United Nations reform: What it means for children" (2006); appointing United Nations coherence focal points to all headquarters entities and regional offices, establishing an office to coordinate UNICEF positions and a rapid-response resource group for staff on United Nations coherence issues. Major results include:

(a) Further improvement of the UNDAF guidelines;

(b) Regional Quality Support and Assurance and inter-agency training;

(c) Introduction of the harmonized approach to cash transfers (HACT), reducing transaction costs for governments, in at least 10 countries;

(d) Harmonization of cost recovery among the funds and programmes;

(e) Reaching a total of 59 United Nations Houses, and common sub-offices, most notably in the Pacific region;

(f) Progress by the United Nations Evaluation Group in establishing system-wide standards and practical support for major evaluations;

(g) Guidance to offices in the eight pilot countries whose governments have chosen to experiment with the "Delivering as One" concept;

(h) Currently 12 UNICEF staff serving as United Nations Resident Coordinators;

(i) United Nations contribution to discussions at the Paris High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness and subsequent meetings, as well as major contributions to common United Nations positions across all five MTSP focus areas.

182. A streamlining of coordination mechanisms was put into effect in 2008, with the UNDG being incorporated into the CEB, reducing overlap and enabling better coordination. UNICEF is playing an important role in ensuring that the transition is

smooth, and continues to contribute both financially and through provision of personnel to support inter-agency collaboration — for example, the provision of senior staff to support the Regional Directors Teams in Eastern and Southern Africa and in Latin America and the Caribbean, and dedicated funding for United Nations coherence in each regional office.

183. Despite some progress, the simplification and harmonization of United Nations business processes still lags; UNICEF has taken an active role in addressing this challenge.

184. The next few years are expected to bring greater clarity in the separation of UNDP actions to support the United Nations system (including support to the Resident Coordinators) and its own programmatic actions, facilitating greater empowerment of the Resident Coordinator. Other issues that will require continued attention include:

(a) Greater inclusion of all UNDG agencies in ways that increase the momentum, focus and effectiveness of United Nations support for national achievement of the MDGs and other nationally-adopted goals and commitments;

(b) Ensuring the process of achieving greater coherence does not overshadow support to national partners; and

(c) Increasing the use of national systems for cooperation.

185. Under humanitarian "reform", major inter-agency achievements to which UNICEF has contributed include: development of cluster approach guidance, norms, standards and training; development of policy and guidance on the enhanced Central Emergency Response Fund, which stands as the largest source of emergency funding for UNICEF in 2006-2007; and efforts to strengthen the Humanitarian Coordinator System.

186. UNICEF will produce an action plan on the TCPR that will map out the actions UNICEF will take internally and in the CEB for greater efficiency, effectiveness and coherence of the United Nations at country level, including leadership on programmatic issues and in the simplification and harmonization of business practices.

Programme partnerships

187. Global programme partnerships (GPPs) have become an important part of the aid architecture and for implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness principles. These greatly complement the cooperation partnerships pursued at country level in support of national goals and priorities and many of the technical partnerships outlined in the focus areas of the MTSP. GPPs involve multiple public/private stakeholders and constituencies, based on agreements on objectives and organizational arrangements. The current number of GPPs is estimated at 181 with a majority focused on MDGs 1, 6, 7 and 8. UNICEF is currently an official stakeholder in 71 GPPs and is involved in the governance of 29 of them. In many of these, UNICEF offers its convening power around issues affecting children's rights as well as its analytical and operational strengths.

188. GPPs in turn offer the opportunity of shaping international initiatives and building coalitions of support for activities that enhance and leverage resources for

key child-related results, consistent with the MDGs and the MTSP. They also offer a wide range of learning opportunities with other organizations.

189. UNICEF currently hosts the secretariats of the GAVI Alliance, the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative, the Global Movement for Children and the Donors' Working Group on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting. Other contributions involve convening, country-level support, advocacy and communication, supply, data monitoring, resource mobilization and technical assistance.

190. During this MTSP period, UNICEF has become involved in an increasing number of relatively small programme partnerships. This creates the risk of diluting the strategic focus of UNICEF and incurring high transactions costs. An ongoing evaluation of UNICEF engagement in GPPs will yield recommendations that will be used to inform the forthcoming Global Strategy for Collaborative Relationships and Partnerships and the future implementation of the MTSP.

191. Overall, UNICEF will adopt a more strategic approach to programme partnerships, aiming to strike a balance between broad engagement with partners on child-related issues and maintaining its strategic focus. UNICEF will enhance integration of the international and country-level dimensions of its engagement in GPPs.

192. The strategic commitment of UNICEF to partnerships with civil society organizations (CSOs) was clearly articulated in the MTSP. A review was undertaken in 2006 as a first step to understanding and improving UNICEF partnerships with CSOs, focusing on the partners' view of UNICEF. Two key issues arose from the findings of the review: the need to clearly define the UNICEF position on partnering with CSOs; and the need to establish mechanisms with accountabilities to ensure that partnership principles and policies are translated into practice.

Excellence in management and operations

Strengthening human resource management and staff learning

193. During the course of the MTSP, learning for UNICEF staff has become more strategic and accessible with a variety of new programmes designed in partnership with academic institutions. Courses have been rolled out in the areas of social policy, social protection and humanitarian response.

194. A new learning strategy has been endorsed. It will focus on: establishing a leadership assessment methodology within the global Talent Management Framework; redesigning the management and leadership curriculum to reflect the strategic agenda and business processes of UNICEF; refocusing learning designs and delivery methods; strengthening organizational management through systematic induction, individual performance management and functional certification; and developing indicators to monitoring impact.

195. A "New and Emerging Talent Initiative" has been launched to meet current and future needs of UNICEF for attracting, developing and retaining external talent from entry- to mid-career levels. Major improvements have been made in succession planning, including the rotation of Representatives and other senior positions.

196. A proactive approach to vacancy management has enabled maintenance of an average of 97 days recruitment timeline, a decrease over previous years. Functional

sourcing is being pursued through dedicated teams of recruitment managers. Further efforts are underway to harmonize and streamline recruitment processes.

197. Delays have been experienced in the acquisition of a learning management system, development of an electronic performance appraisal system and implementation of e-recruitment. The latter has been integrated within the "One ERP" initiative, and is due to be launched in 2009.

198. Based on experience in the first two years of the MTSP, a number of key performance indicators have been modified, deleted or added for the human resource management function.

Finance and administration

199. Throughout 2006-2007, UNICEF has been a strong participant in various United Nations reform and harmonization initiatives, including: harmonization of Financial Regulations and Rules; implementation of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS); development of Results-Based Budgeting; common Premises and Services; cost recovery policies and the interagency travel and facilities management networks. The monitoring of cash assistance to governments has been strengthened, leading to very low percentages of amounts outstanding for more than nine months.

200. A wide range of policy, procedure and systems enhancements are underway, as envisaged by the MTSP, including: guidance for managers to facilitate long term programme and financial planning; decentralization of the rephasing of programme funds to field offices to support multi-year planning and implementation; decentralization of transfers between budget lines to simplify budget management; automation of budget authorizations to reduce time lags and improved management of cash resources.

201. The management of country programme and budget reviews was fully delegated to Regional Directors. Consolidated and user-friendly guidance and materials were issued to support the UNICEF response in emergency situations while facilitating sound financial management practices.

202. Several key factors have supported the progress made: more effective use of technology to automate and decentralize activities, where possible; use of a quarterly scorecard to monitor key performance indicators; and more effective use of the intranet.

203. Continuing challenges have been experienced due to the difficulty of recruiting qualified staff in both field and headquarters locations and the need to develop further user-friendly guidance materials due to the sophistication of the financial and administrative management systems needed to deal with the increasingly complex funding structure of the organization. UNICEF will continue to collaborate with other United Nations agencies on simplification and harmonization initiatives, results-based budgeting, the reduction of transaction costs and promoting adaptation to the changing development assistance environment without compromising on transparency and efficiency.

Supply

204. *Streamlining supply systems to deliver results*. UNICEF is realigning the supply base to provide products that have the biggest impact on the MDGs. This will require reducing the product range so that efforts are focused on fewer but more strategic supplies. In this way, more time can be devoted to management of the strategic supply base: effective product forecasting; integration of programming and supply; supplier development and management; efficient delivery and logistics; and improved monitoring. Supply systems will support this shift, allowing for monitoring throughout the supply chain; reducing the process-time burden of each transaction; and creating greater flexibility and accountability.

205. *Wider expertise of supply chain activities*. UNICEF will increase supply skills by enhancing competencies required from staff, establishing networks where knowledge can be obtained and replicating strengths and expertise in some commodity groups into other key areas. Its global presence in the field — along with its knowledge of particular markets and products, and the relationships established throughout the supply chain — will enable UNICEF to lead in those key supply groups. UNICEF can identify bottlenecks and gaps, and then direct prospective partners to address them. Effective leadership in supply can bring targeted support to national capacity-building efforts.

206. *Enhancing partnerships to achieve results*. UNICEF needs access to skills that it currently does not possess and to resources that could be leveraged to improve supply availability. This will involve finding outsourcing partners for non-strategic supplies, reducing the transaction burden for UNICEF, or collaborating with key counterparts in order to have the desired impact. Mechanisms in some areas exist and are working (procurement services, government stand-by partners, private-sector partners), and need to be exploited further. Other mechanisms are quite new and offer the potential for much better supply collaboration, particularly with the NGO sector and the United Nations family. Other partnership opportunities have only recently been developed. Partners in academia, for example, could assist in product and systems innovation, provide new and emerging talent and skills, and help UNICEF provide leadership in key product areas through publication and research.

Information and communication technology (ICT) management

207. Efforts have continued to provide innovative, effective, secure IT infrastructure, services and integrated business information solutions in the most cost effective manner possible, in support of the work of UNICEF.

208. New requirements aim to modernize UNICEF systems to support the standardization, simplification and streamlining of business processes; introduce IPSAS compliance; and improve access to quality information for the field offices. UNICEF has decided to move to a single-application Enterprise Resource Planning system (ERP), using SAP software in all offices. This will involve migrating the IT business systems to an integrated IPSAS-compliant ERP, beginning 2010.

209. A regional performance indicators scorecard, the first version of the human resources dashboard and web-based MTSP monitoring reports were key initiatives implemented to support UNICEF performance management. The scorecard provides managers with information on eleven key operational indicators while the dashboard

presents high-level indicators in areas such as recruitment, staff planning and gender balance.

210. ICT services were crucial in ensuring rapid and efficient delivery of humanitarian services and security for field staff. In eight recent emergencies, the inter-agency emergency telecommunications cluster was activated, with UNICEF working with WFP and OCHA to provide services to NGO and United Nations first responders and humanitarian workers.

211. Increased Internet bandwidth in several offices has improved corporate systems and services. It is now possible to manage smaller offices' ICT services from larger offices, leading to cost savings and streamlining of processes. However, the lack of harmonized ICT standards across United Nations agencies and the difficulty of integrating technologies continue to pose challenges.

212. The ICT goals of UNICEF have been revised to reflect key organizational shifts since the inception of the MTSP. The revised goals are to: position headquarters as a customer and field-oriented service-based capacity by strengthening customer relationships and programme focus; develop and enhance UNICEF integrated information management systems; realign and strengthen the global IT infrastructure to support programme and operational requirements; use IT to analyse, manage and disseminate information in support of the UNICEF information and knowledge management strategy; and ensure timely delivery of appropriate IT and telecommunications services for UNICEF and inter-agency emergency operations.

Audit and risk management

213. In 2006, the Executive Director strengthened the UNICEF oversight function by revising the charter so that the audit committee would have an exclusively external membership. In its 2007 annual report, the audit committee expressed satisfaction with the strength, credibility, coverage and quality of the internal audit function of UNICEF. An independent external quality assessment of the internal audit function will take place in 2008.

214. The development of an enterprise risk management framework has been initiated, to systemize the identification, assessment and treatment of risks across the organization. This should lead to improved risk management practices and greater assurance that UNICEF will achieve its objectives.

215. The Office of Internal Audit has continued to report periodically on risk management practices in UNICEF, including the implementation of audit recommendations.

216. As envisaged by the MTSP, the internal audit function will continue to assess the effectiveness and adequacy of programme and operations management practices, governance processes and internal controls through reviews at all levels within UNICEF. These will consider the extent to which:

(a) Management is aware of and takes appropriate measures to control internal and external risks to the mission of UNICEF and its accountabilities;

(b) Resources are acquired economically, used effectively and efficiently, and are adequately protected;

(c) The actions of staff and management comply with relevant rules, policies, standards and procedures;

(d) Governance and supervision structures exist and function to guide and monitor internal controls;

(e) Significant information is available, accurate, and timely, and is used to measure and report on results against defined standards and targets.

Draft decision

217. It is *recommended* that the Executive Board adopt the following draft decision:

The Executive Board,

1. *Welcomes* the report on the midterm review of the medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) 2006-2009 (E/ICEF/2008/18), its companion document on the revised annexes to the MTSP (E/ICEF/2008/19) and the background note on the extension of the MTSP 2006-2009 until the end of 2011 (E/ICEF/2008/25), and commends the extensive consultations, performance analysis and evaluation work on which the review was based;

2. *Endorses* the general conclusions of the review, including the adjustments envisaged for the remaining period of the current MTSP and the implications identified for the preparation of the next plan;

3. *Recognizes* the benefits of extending the period of the current MTSP in order to:

(a) align it with the strategic planning cycles of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund;

(b) enable the secretariat to continue to instil a sense of urgency with regard to cooperation and partnerships for the Millennium Development Goals, the Millennium Declaration and other internationally agreed goals, rather than having to move immediately after the 2008 midterm review of the current MTSP to a further major planning exercise for a new medium-term strategic plan; and

(c) ensure that the subsequent UNICEF strategic planning cycle, covering the period from 2012 to 2015, will be aligned with the target date for the Millennium Development Goals;

4. *Decides* to extend the period of the current MTSP by two years, until the end of 2011; and

5. *Looks forward* to a discussion on the end-of-cycle review of the extended MTSP at its first regular session of 2011.